



Mother Orange Tree

Written by
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Mother Orange Tree



Meet the Mother Orange Tree of Oroville, California. It is over 160 years old.



It is the oldest orange tree in northern California. The Mother Orange Tree is part of California's history.



In 1856, a judge helped build a toll bridge over the Feather River. He planted a two-year old orange seedling from Sacramento by the bridge.



People did not think orange trees would grow that far north, but the Mother Orange Tree grew and grew.

Sweet, Juicy Fruit



Gold miners enjoyed its sweet, juicy fruit. The fruit had seeds inside. They planted the seeds by their cabins. They named the oranges for their camp, Bidwell's Bar. Some of the Mother Orange Tree's seedlings lasted longer than the cabins!



Other seedlings from the Mother Orange Tree grew in people's yards and along the streets.

The Orange Grove



Hundreds of people came to see the Mother Orange Tree. Many took seeds and seedlings to plant their own groves.



Soon, northern California had many orange growers.



For a time, the Bidwell's Bar orange was the most popular orange to grow. Later, the navel orange became the most popular.



Navel oranges are not as juicy, but they are easier to peel and eat. There are other parent navel orange trees growing in Southern California.

Winter Buds



In winter, the Mother Orange Tree grows buds. In spring, the buds turn into flowers. They are shaped like cups. The flowers smell good, like oranges do.



Most of the flowers fall off the tree by summer. If the trees get enough water, more flowers stay on. The Mother Orange Tree is near water. In most years, many flowers stay on its branches.



In fall, the flowers change into round fruit. At first, the oranges are small and green. By the next winter, they turn orange as they ripen.



The Mother Orange Tree can bear 600 pounds of oranges in a year. That is three times more than most full-grown orange trees.

Tall Trees



Most orange trees grow about 25 feet tall.



The Mother Orange Tree is more than 33 feet tall. Its spreading branches make it almost as wide.



Over the years, the Mother Orange Tree has been cut back and moved. It has lived through a fire and many freezes. Over its 160 years, this tree has made many juicy oranges. The Mother Orange Tree is still growing, and still making oranges, today.



The Mother Orange Tree's seeds and seedlings have grown many fine orange trees. Just think how many oranges the Mother Orange Tree's offspring have made!

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